

## **Appendix 3**

### **Review of the Arts in Aberdeenshire**

Arts consultants Bonnar Keenlyside conducted a review of the arts in Aberdeenshire during 2001. Their research included consultations with the arts community and other organisations that currently or potentially have a role within the arts in Aberdeenshire.

### **The Findings**

It has been recognised, through the review conducted by Bonnar Keenlyside that the Aberdeenshire Council Arts Development Service has been spread too thin, has been unable to support adequately the independent sector and to take advantage of all partnerships and opportunities. The breadth of the roles and responsibilities within the Arts Team has contributed towards a lack of focus and a lack of clarity. It has also been recognised that the arts in Aberdeenshire lack cohesive leadership at this point and that, although there are some excellent artists and individuals, we lack sufficient champions and advocates.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

We have considerable assets in the arts in Aberdeenshire. We have a wealth of artists and a host of individual talents including a strong voluntary sector, our Arts Team and some key professional organisations. We have achieved many successes in all art forms throughout Aberdeenshire and have worked in many different partnerships. We have a unique cultural heritage and traditions with our landscape, museums, buildings, stone circles, castles and our sense of identity and community—pride in place. There is the opportunity to organise ourselves better to make the most of what we have to improve the quality of life in Aberdeenshire.

There are specific opportunities to work regionally with those involved in arts and in culture, and to contribute towards economic prosperity through tourism.

There are specific opportunities to achieve more for young people and to contribute towards the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

### **Weaknesses and Challenges**

Our weaknesses are largely those concerning our focus and leadership, and our failure to advocate and promote the arts as well as we might.

We have failed to realise fully the potential of the arts to improve the education of our children. We have also not made connections between our cultural heritage and the arts.

Our challenges are to communicate and advocate the arts and to organise ourselves better. We need to market and promote the arts better and to win hearts and minds.

We need to engage more with schools. We need to build better co-ordination between Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen and with tourism, enterprise and the private sector.

We need to address specific weaknesses in terms of gathering information and baseline data about what we do now and the impact the arts have now, to support this.

We need to ensure that we provide the best support we can to artists and organisations, and other partners, involved in the arts throughout Aberdeenshire. We need to find an appropriate balance between providing resources at the centre and providing funding for local groups operating in the community.

To do this, we need a shared vision and objectives . We also need active involvement from individuals and organisations within the community.

In the past the role of the local authority has been perceived to be that of arts provider. However the new strategy looks towards forming active partnerships with crucial sectors of the community such as education, environment, business etc. so that provision and participation are developed by the community itself, with appropriate support in terms of infrastructure.

